

Rivers of Sound



DIRECTOR: JEAN ANTOINE-DUNNE

The documentary *Rivers of Sound* celebrates the life and career of Gordon Rohlehr. In the main, it is a montage of images of Rohlehr's formative years, through which the film traces the high points of his career and focuses on ideas that have become synonymous with his work. Footage from several archives dating back over forty years is used for this purpose. These include interviews with Gordon Rohlehr filmed in Trinidad primarily by the TV channel Gayelle and featuring Tony Hall in the 1980s; and excerpts from a Trinidad radio series on calypso, "From Attila to the Seventies" hosted by Rohlehr from January to July 1973. There are also clips from videos of keynote lectures, primarily the Sir Winston Scott Memorial Lecture, 22 November 1990 delivered in Barbados, and The Mellon Lecture, 1997, delivered while Rohlehr was Visiting Mellon Foundation Scholar for Tulane University.

The main body of the documentary was filmed in Trinidad and Guyana. The film crew visited Guyana on two occasions and interviewed his family, in particular his mother, Mrs. Iris Rohlehr and sister, Ms. Iris Rohlehr, and brother, Godfrey. We also filmed Rohlehr at his home in Tunapuna and spoke to his wife, Betty-Ann, daughter Donna and son Dike.

The documentary begins at the conference celebrating Rohlehr's life and works hosted by the Department of Liberal Arts, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine in 2007. It features Professor Bridget Brereton's address and events from the Creative Arts presentation, including their reenactment of Rohlehr's musical piece "Depression Blues" which was put to music by Sat Sharma, then Head of Creative Arts at the University of the West Indies St Augustine. Shots of the calypso night of that celebratory conference are used to highlight Rohlehr's work on the calypso.

The landscape footage in Guyana is used to illustrate Rohlehr's interpretation of writers such as Martin Carter and Wilson Harris. The documentary ends in Barbados with a clip from the Sir Winston Scott Memorial Lecture and privileges Kamau Brathwaite, whose work has been at the forefront of Rohlehr's teaching of Caribbean literature and whose ideas are seminal to his thought.

Rivers of Sound is a tribute to the original research and extraordinary dedication of a great Caribbean critic, Gordon Rohlehr.